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(54) POKER MACHINE

(71) AINSWORTH NOMINEES PTY. LTD.

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(72) PHILIP CLIVE CROUCH

(74) RI

(57) Claim 1. A poker machine of the kind consisting of plurality of reels arranged side by side each reel having on its circumference a plurality of symbols having one symbol at each of a plurality of positions around the circumference of the reel, a viewing window through which one or more lines of symbols, one symbol on each line being from each reel, are visible, means to rotate and stop the reels in a random manner, microprocessor means controlling the last mentioned means said microprocessor means being programmed to operate payout means to pay a predetermined prize from the machine on the appearance of a predetermined combination of symbols in said window characterised in that on one or more of the reels of the machine at one or more positions two of the said symbols are depicted side by side in the same position on the circumference of the reel or reels.

The present invention relates to poker machines of the kind consisting of a plurality of reels arranged side by side each reel having on its circumference a plurality of symbols, one or more lines of which are visible through a viewing window. The reels are rotated, for example by means of stepper motors and are brought to a halt in a random manner to display a number of symbols one from each reel in a line or lines in the viewing window. If any one of a plurality of combinations of symbols indicated usually on the face of the machine appear in a line in the viewing window the machine delivers a prize to the player the amount of the prize depending on the combination appearing in the window. In the past such poker machines have been operated in a purely mechanical manner the reels being stopped at random by mechanical means. More recently the stopping of the reels is controlled by means of a microprocessor directly or in association with a random number generator the microprocessor being programmed also to control the payout mechanism.

In an attempt to make the playing of poker machines more attractive to players numerous attempts have been made to introduce variations into the types of combination of symbols that give rise to the payment of a prize.

The object of the present invention is to introduce a variation in which at selected positions on one or more of the reels of the machine two of the symbols appearing elsewhere on the reels are depicted side by side in the same position on the reel. This apparently trivial alteration in the arrangement of the symbols however enables a variety of games to be played on the machine that have not hitherto been possible.

The invention consists in a poker machine of the kind consisting of plurality of reels arranged side by side each reel having on its circumference a plurality of symbols having one symbol at each of a plurality of positions around the circumference of the reel, a viewing window through which

one or more lines of symbols, one symbol on each line being from each reel, are visible, means to rotate and stop the reels in a random manner, microprocessor means controlling the last mentioned means said microprocessor means being programmed to operate payout means to pay a predetermined prize from the machine on the appearance of a predetermined combination of symbols in said window characterised in that on one or more of the reels of the machine at one or more positions two of the said symbols are depicted side by side in the same position on the circumference of the reel or reels.

In order that the nature of the invention may be better understood preferred forms of the invention are hereinafter described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a view of a viewing window of a machine depicting an arrangement of symbols as might appear in connection with a first game;

Fig. 2 is a logic diagram for the game described in connection with Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a figure similar to Fig. 1 in relation to a second game;

Fig. 4 is a logic diagram for the second game described in relation to Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a figure similar to Fig. 1 illustrating a third game;

Fig. 6 is a figure similar to Fig. 1 illustrating a fourth game; and

Fig. 7 is a logic diagram in relation to the third and fourth games described in connection with Figs. 5 and 6.

In Fig. 1 which illustrates the appearance of the viewing window of a five reel poker machine in which the symbols are those used in connection with playing cards, the symbol K for example standing for King and the symbol J for Jack. In this particular example the other symbols not seen

would be A for Ace, Q for Queen and numbers such as 10 and 9 depicting card values. In the situation depicted in Fig. 1 the symbol K appears on reels 1, 2, 4 and 5 in different positions in the window. On the centre reel 3 appears a double symbol JK which is made up of two of the normal symbols J and K arranged side by side. In this connection the term "side by side" is to be read broadly to cover any relationship of the two symbols, for example one above the other or diagonally opposed. The significant feature is that the double symbol occupies a position occupied by a normal single symbol. On the centre reel in this particular arrangement there could be other double symbols, for example AJ and Q9, arranged at positions around the circumference of the reel. In this particular game, when a double symbol occurs on the centre line with a no-win combination and symbols which match either of those of the double symbol occur at positions on other reels which, when moved one position clockwise or anti-clockwise would lie on the centre line or which actually lie on the centre line will be regarded by the microprocessor as lying on the centre line and in the instance illustrated would give rise to a prize for five Kings. The manner in which this is achieved is set out in the logic table of Fig. 2.

In the second game illustrated in Fig. 3, as in Fig. 1 the blank positions on the reels are to be taken to be filled with any symbols which do not provide prize winning combinations. Under these circumstances the appearance of the double symbol at the centre position of the centre reel 3 is noted by the microprocessor which then respins the remaining reels automatically and should a winning combination of either Jacks or Kings appear on the centre line a prize will be paid according to the prize schedule. The manner in which this is carried out is illustrated in the logic table of Fig. 4.

In the third game illustrated in Fig. 5 a double symbol

JK appears on the centre reel 3 below the centre line on which there are already three J symbols. Under these circumstances the double symbol is regarded as having been transferred to the centre line and a payout is made according to the payout prescribed by the prize table for four Jacks.

The fourth game illustrated in Fig. 6 is applicable to what is known as a three coin three line game in which a player purchases from 1 to 3 lines. Under these circumstances the double symbol will be transferred to line 3 to provide an appropriate payout.

Fig. 7 is a logic table applicable to the third and fourth games described with reference to Figs. 5 and 6.

It should be appreciated that the four games described above are merely illustrations of the possibilities that present themselves by the adoption of the basic concept of the invention namely the depiction of duplicated symbols.

THE CLAIM DEFINING THE INVENTION IS AS FOLLOWS:-

1. A poker machine of the kind consisting of plurality of reels arranged side by side each reel having on its circumference a plurality of symbols having one symbol at each of a plurality of positions around the circumference of the reel, a viewing window through which one or more lines of symbols, one symbol on each line being from each reel, are visible, means to rotate and stop the reels in a random manner, microprocessor means controlling the last mentioned means said microprocessor means being programmed to operate payout means to pay a predetermined prize from the machine on the appearance of a predetermined combination of symbols in said window characterised in that on one or more of the reels of the machine at one or more positions two of the said symbols are depicted side by side in the same position on the circumference of the reel or reels.

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AINSWORTH NOMINEES PTY. LIMITED
Patent Attorneys for the Applicant:

F.B. RICE & CO.

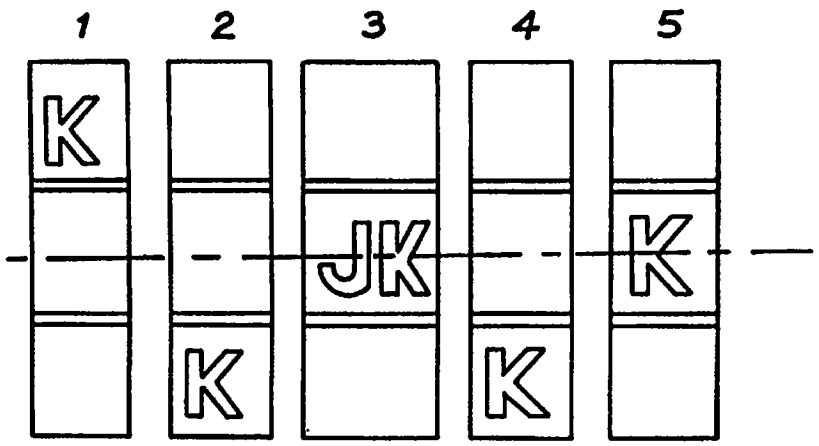

FIG. 1

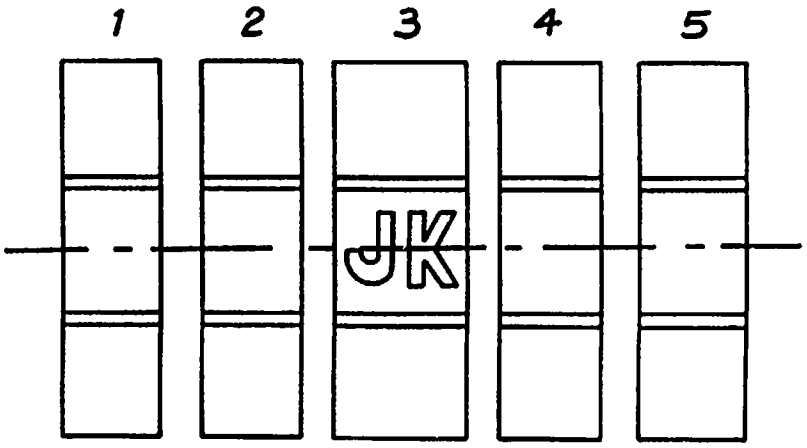

FIG. 3

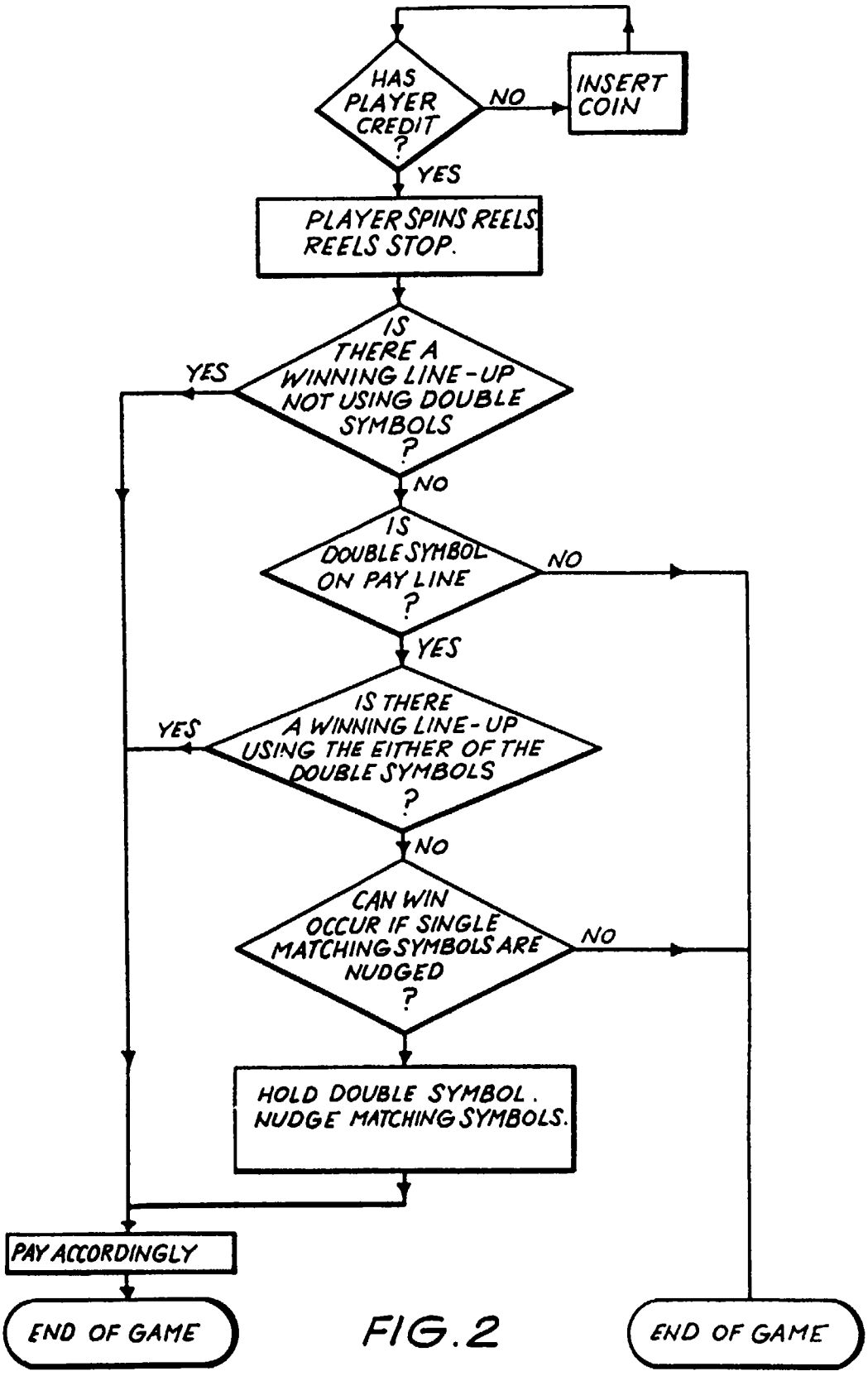
HAS PLAYER CREDIT ?
NO
INSERT COIN
YES
PLAYER SPINS REELS. REELS STOP.
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP NOT USING DOUBLE SYMBOLS ?
YES
NO
IS DOUBLE SYMBOL ON PAY LINE ?
NO
YES
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP USING THE EITHER OF THE DOUBLE SYMBOLS ?
YES
NO
CAN WIN OCCUR IF SINGLE MATCHING SYMBOLS ARE NUDGED ?
NO
HOLD DOUBLE SYMBOL. NUDGE MATCHING SYMBOLS.
PAY ACCORDINGLY
END OF GAME
END OF GAME

FIG. 2

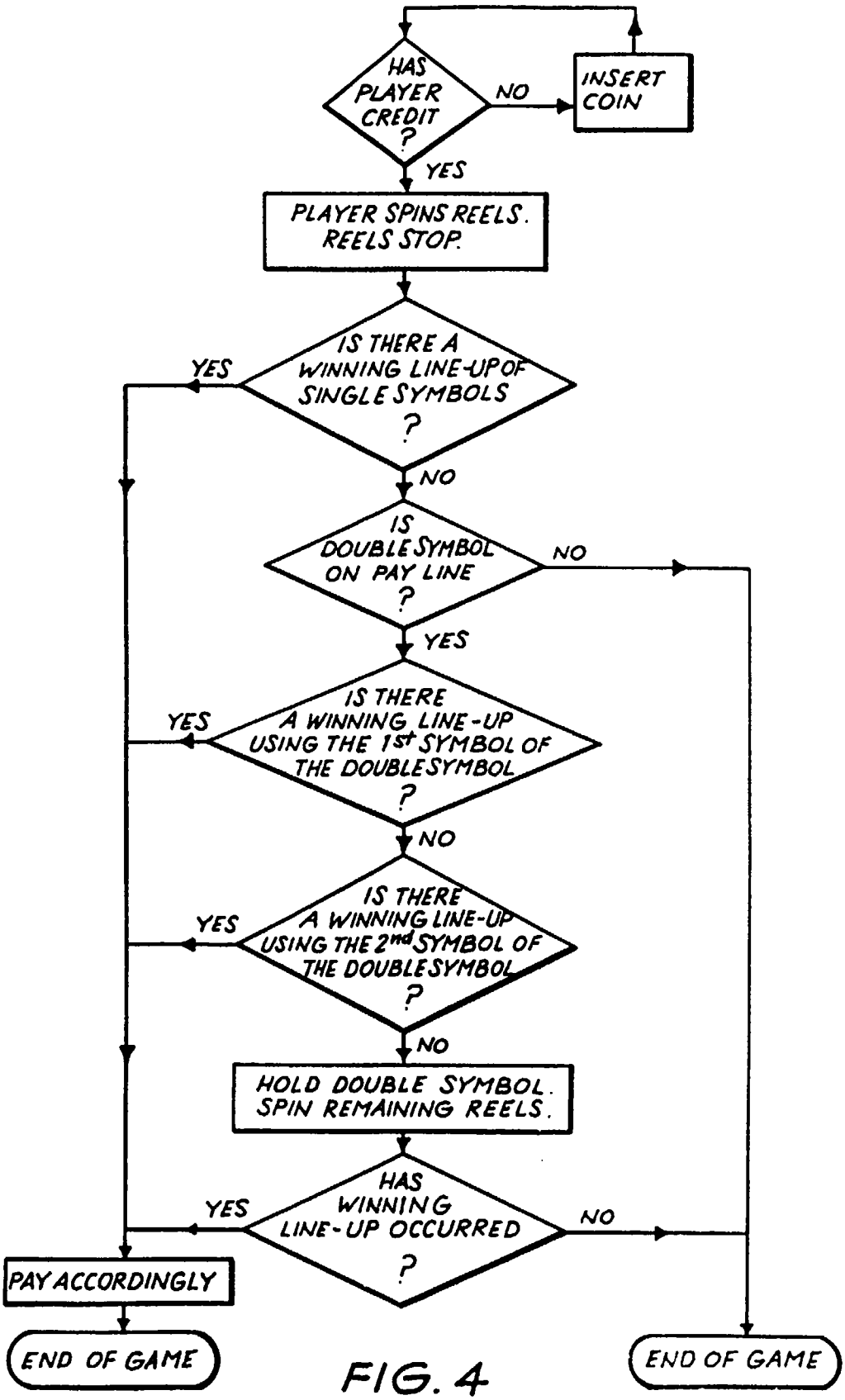
HAS PLAYER CREDIT ?
NO
INSERT COIN
YES
PLAYER SPINS REELS. REELS STOP.
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP OF SINGLE SYMBOLS ?
YES
NO
IS DOUBLE SYMBOL ON PAY LINE ?
NO
YES
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP USING THE 1st SYMBOL OF THE DOUBLE SYMBOL ?
YES
NO
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP USING THE 2nd SYMBOL OF THE DOUBLE SYMBOL ?
YES
NO
HOLD DOUBLE SYMBOL. SPIN REMAINING REELS.
HAS WINNING LINE-UP OCCURRED ?
YES
NO
PAY ACCORDINGLY
END OF GAME
END OF GAME

FIG. 4

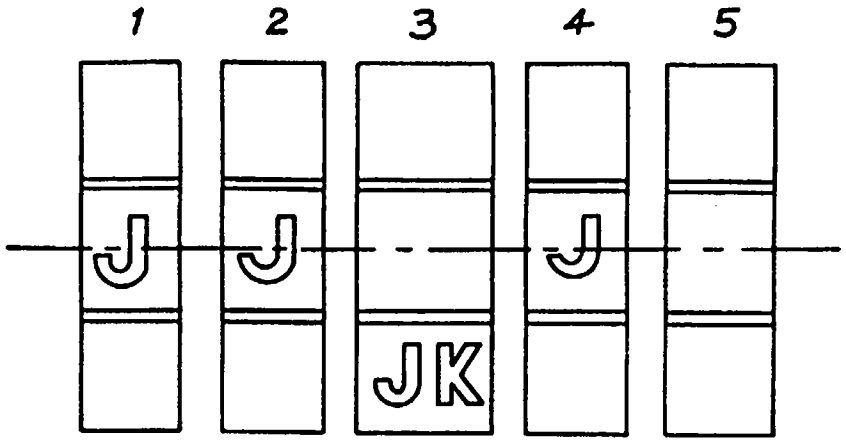

FIG. 5

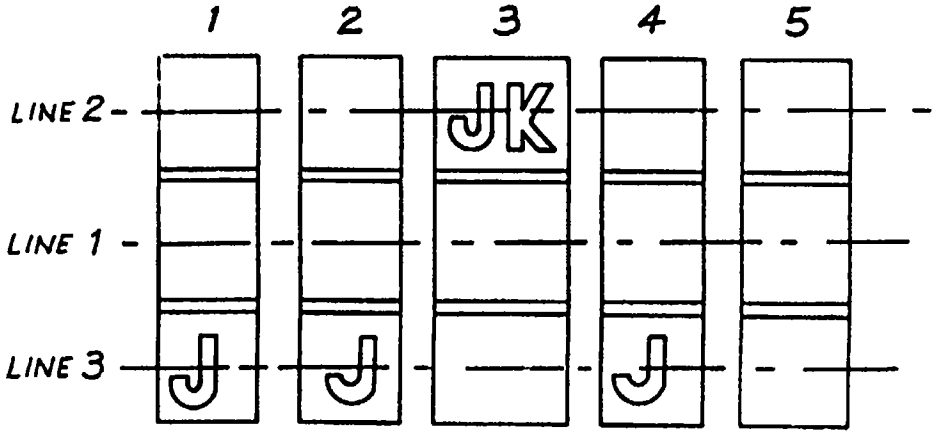

FIG. 6

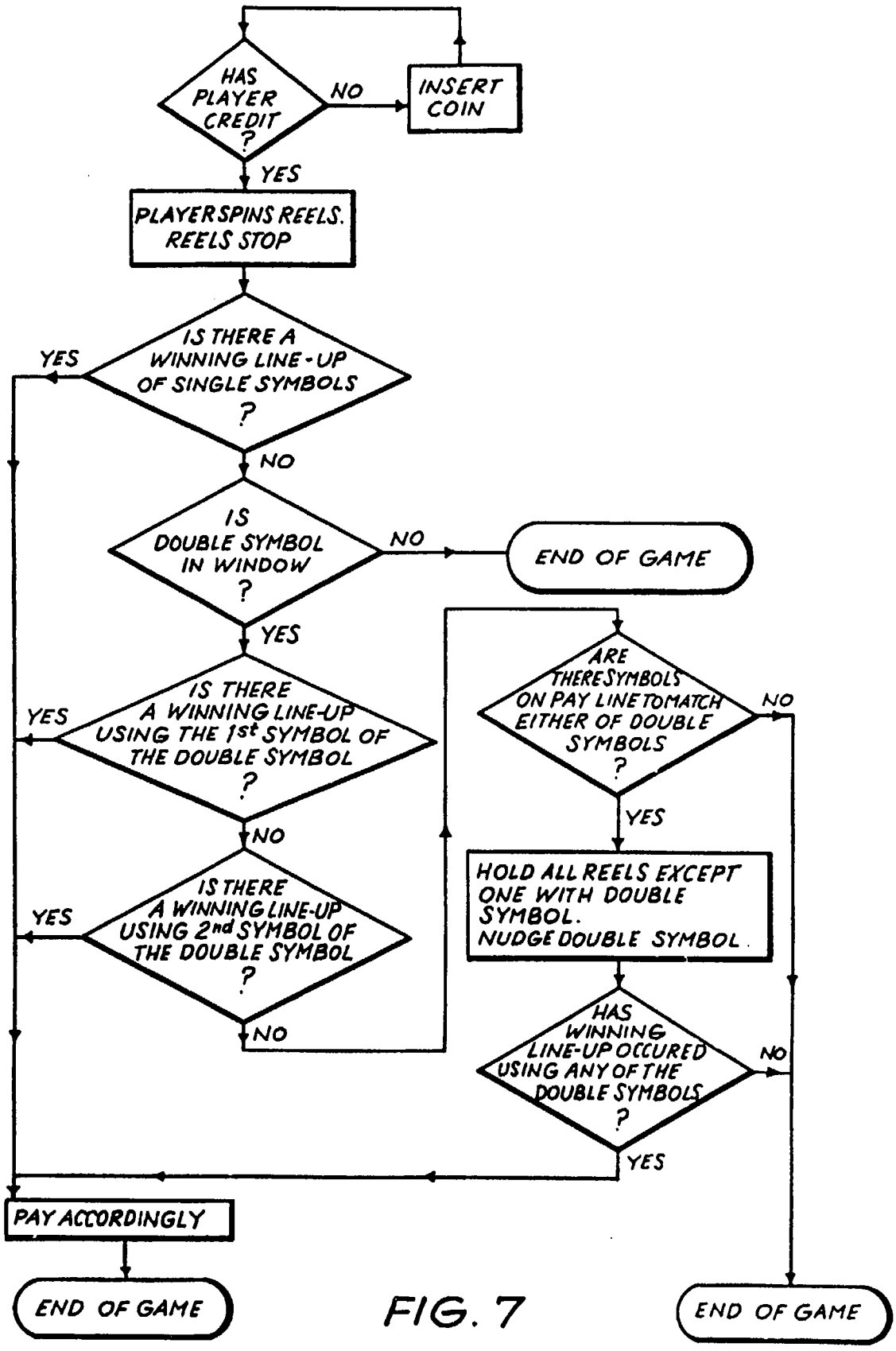
HAS PLAYER CREDIT ?
NO
INSERT COIN
YES
PLAYER SPINS REELS. REELS STOP
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP OF SINGLE SYMBOLS ?
YES
NO
IS DOUBLE SYMBOL IN WINDOW ?
NO
END OF GAME
YES
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP USING THE 1st SYMBOL OF THE DOUBLE SYMBOL ?
YES
NO
IS THERE A WINNING LINE-UP USING 2nd SYMBOL OF THE DOUBLE SYMBOL ?
YES
NO
ARE THERE SYMBOLS ON PAY LINE TO MATCH EITHER OF DOUBLE SYMBOLS ?
NO
YES
HOLD ALL REELS EXCEPT ONE WITH DOUBLE SYMBOL. NUDGE DOUBLE SYMBOL.
HAS WINNING LINE-UP OCCURED USING ANY OF THE DOUBLE SYMBOLS ?
NO
YES
PAY ACCORDINGLY
END OF GAME
END OF GAME

FIG. 7